

Message Text

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42

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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O R 130904Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7364

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 10978

NODIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CAPTION CHANGED FM EXDIS TO NODIS)

DEPT PLEASE PASS IMMEDIATE TO USEUCOM STUTTGART FOR POLAD
TO PASS AMB KUBISCH

DEPT PLEASE ALSO PASS TO SECDEF IMMEDIATE

MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, GR, US, YO

SUBJECT: YUGOSLAV DEFENSE MINISTER'S SUSPICIONS ABOUT US INTENTIONS

REF: ATHENS 10970 (DTG 121723Z OCT 76)

1. DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF ASKED CHARGE TO CALL AT
MINISTRY EVENING OF OCTOBER 11 TO DISCUSS DISTURBING
IMPRESSION HE HAD BROUGHT BACK FROM BELGRADE. AVEROFF
SAID THAT WITHIN AN HOUR OF HIS ARRIVAL DEFENSE MINISTER
LJUBICIC HAD MADE POINT, WHICH HE DEVELOPED IN GREATER
DETAIL LATER, THAT YUGOSLAVIA WAS CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO SUPER-
POWERS AND DID NOT KNOW HOW SITUATION COULD BE RESOLVED.
HE COMPARED SO-CALLED SONNENFELDT DOCTRINE TO YALTA
AGREEMENT TO DIVIDE UP EUROPE AND SAID YUGOSLAVE FEAR
THEY WILL BE FORCED TO CHOOSE ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER OR
BE PULLED APART. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION LATER,
LJUBICIC CITED TWO EXAMPLES TO SUPPORT HIS VIEW THAT
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US MAY BE TRYING TO UNDERMINE YUGOSLAV INDEPENDENCE
AND NON-ALIGNMENT. FIRST, WHEN PRESIDENT FORD DURING
HIS VISIT HAD ASKED WHAT KIND OF ARMS YUGOSLAVS WOULD
LIKE TO HAVE FROM US, THEY HAD GIVEN LIST OF MANY ITEMS

AMONG WHICH WERE TOW ANTI-TANK MISSILES. WITHIN DAYS, LJUBICIC CLAIMED, AMERICAN AMBASSADOR HAD MADE ANNOUNCEMENT TO PRESS ABOUT ARMS REQUEST IN WHICH HE SINGLED OUT TOWS, CAUSING FUROR IN YUGOSLAV-SOVIET RELATIONS BECAUSE ONLY SOVIETS HAVE TANKS ON BORDER AND TOWS THEREFORE MUST BE MEANT TO COUNTER THEM. SECOND EXAMPLE GAVE TO SUPPORT HIS SUSPICION IS FACT THAT WE TOLERATE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF CROATIAN NATIONALISTS IN US.

2. AVEROFF SAID HE TOLD LJUBICIC HE WAS ASTONISHED AT THIS ANALYSIS AND COMPLETELY DISAGREED WITH IT AS FAR AS US WAS CONCERNED, ALTHOUGH HE WASN'T SO SURE OF SOVIET INTENTIONS. AVEROFF SAID HE KNOWS FOR A FACT THAT US, LIKE GREECE, WANTS YUGOSLAVIA TO CONTINUE AS INDEPENDENT AND NON-ALIGNED STATE AND THAT WHEN THE "REGIME CHANGES" US WILL NOT TRY TO DRAG YUGOSLAVIA INTO WESTERN CAMP. TO GIVE AUTHORITY TO THIS ARGUMENT, AVEROFF SAID HE MADE UP WHITE LIE WHICH HE WANTS US TO KNOW ABOUT SO WE CAN PROTECT HIS CREDIBILITY. HE TOLD LJUBICIC THAT WHEN SECRETARY RUMSFELD STOPPED IN ATHENS THE TWO THINGS HE HAD BEEN MOST INTERESTED IN WERE (A) GREEK-TURKISH DIFFICULTIES, AND (B) DEVELOPMENT OF GREEK RELATIONS WITH YUGOSLAVIA AS A MEASURE TO SUPPORT CONTINUED YUGOSLAV INDEPENDENCE AND NON-ALIGNMENT. AVEROFF TOLD LJUBICIC THAT RUMSFELD HAD BEEN VERY HAPPY TO LEARN THAT GREECE WAS ACTIVELY WORKING TO IMPROVE ITS TIES WITH ITS NORTHERN NEIGHBOR TO THAT END. THESE ARGUMENTS ONLY PARTLY DISPELLED LJUBICIC'S CONCERNS, AVEROFF CONCLUDED, AND HE THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT THAT WE KNOW ABOUT THEM.

3. COMMENT: ADDRESSEES ARE IN BETTER POSITION THAN EMBASSY TO EVALUATE SIGNIFICANCE OF AVEROFF'S COMMENTS, BUT HE OBVIOUSLY BELIEVES LJUBICIC'S ANXIETIES AND DOUBTS ABOUT US POLICY AND INTENTIONS ARE REAL AND NEED TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION.

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CAPTION RECATEGORIZED PER STATE 253313 (MR. MACASEY).

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